

# Cassidy enjoys high energy of the stage

By Mike Kalina  
Post-Gazette Staff Writer

No, David Cassidy doesn't miss the screaming legions of hysterical young girls who idolized him in the 1970s now that he's switched from pop to stage.

"At least now the audience can hear me," he said. "I don't miss the screaming at all."

He did admit missing the adoration a bit, but the "instant gratification of the stage" supplants it.

"You go out there and get an immediate reaction from the audience. It's really a great high being able to draw a strong reaction from an audience."

But he said that it's not easy to do.

"Playing a major role on Broadway means living the theater. Let's face it, when you play a role eight times a week, there's little time for much else. But I felt the effort was well worth it."

Cassidy said that he feels as a result of his Broadway experience his career is in better shape now than it has been in years. He added he owes much of it to "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," in which he starred for six months. He's repeating that Broadway role on the road, and will be at Heinz Hall Dec. 19-23.

How difficult was the transition from pop/TV stardom to the stage?

"Actually, I got my start on Broadway, but most people don't know it. I was 18 when I landed a featured part in 'The Fig Leaves Are Falling,' by Alan Sherman and Albert Haig."

But it was far from easy getting the role: "I auditioned six times for the part. The producers just weren't sure I was right for it."

He not only proved right for the part in 1968, but a talent scout in the audience spotted him and flew him to Los Angeles for an audition.

The trip would lead to a starring

role the following year on "The Partridge Family." (His stepmother, Shirley Jones, a former Smithton resident, also starred in the highly successful TV show. He, ironically, will follow an engagement by his stepmother at Heinz Hall, where she appeared as part of the Pops series).

His TV role wasn't just a partridge in a pear tree for Cassidy. It resulted in teen-age stardom, 18 gold records and a fortune in royalties.

Now that he's made his hay, he said he can afford to do what he wants — like starring in "Joseph," a role he calls as "uplifting as the show."

"The show's very high on energy. It seems everyone walks away feeling good. I think it helps bring light into people's lives. I'm proud to be associated with it."

The musical was written by Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice, the team that also wrote "Jesus

Christ Superstar," "Evita" and "Cats." They wrote it in the mid-'60s "as a class project, or a thesis," Cassidy noted.

"It started out being just 15 minutes long. It's since become a full-length musical, which has been performed all over the world and in countless languages."

In addition to playing Pittsburgh, the touring company also will have visited Houston and Toronto before Cassidy returns to his 50-acre spread in Santa Barbara, his fleet of 40 horses and Meryl Tanz.

Tanz is his partner in raising thoroughbreds for selling and racing. "I have about six horses racing at California tracks," he said.

In addition to Tanz being a business partner, she soon will become a partner with Cassidy in marriage. It will be wife No. 2 for Cassidy.

"Who said people can't work together and be married? I think it's very possible, particularly if you have similar interests as we do."